

Public/Private Partnerships

What is a Public/Private Partnership?

A Public/Private Partnership is a funding agreement between a local education agency and a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved nonpublic special education program for the purpose of serving students in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The Public/Private Partnership is to enhance Individualized Education Program (IEP) services for students within their community and is intended for students with significant and intensive needs.

Does a Public/Private Partnership support inclusion?

Yes. A Public/Private Partnership supports inclusion and facilitates the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. Regardless of the number of different students enrolled within a fiscal year, payment is based upon the tuition for a specified number of full-time equivalent (FTE) seats. The enhanced flexibility in funding through a Public/Private Partnership supports short-term placements, access to public school instruction and activities, and the transitioning of students to a less restrictive program when they are ready.

Of what benefit is a Public/Private Partnership for a student, local school system, and nonpublic provider?

A **student** can benefit from the Public/Private Partnership by being placed in an appropriate placement immediately upon parent approval. The partnership program is especially beneficial for a student with a short-term need, requiring an alternative special education program, experiencing a crisis, or awaiting a more intensive placement. Children in partnership programs may have a greater opportunity for transitioning into less restrictive programs and accessing all resources available in the public school. Most often, children are served closer to their homes and within their communities.

The Public/Private Partnership allows a **local education agency** to serve more students at a reduced cost. Regardless of the number of different students enrolled within a fiscal year, payment is based upon the tuition for a specified number of seats. These partnership programs may serve more children and are primarily housed in local schools, often resulting in a more overall cost effective program per child.

The **Nonpublic Provider** has an opportunity to expand services through the development of partnerships and is guaranteed funding for the number of full-time seats outlined in the agreement. The providers have the opportunity to design programs that specifically meet the programming needs of the local school system.

Does the Maryland State Department of Education support funding for Public/Private Partnerships?

YES. The MSDE Public/Private Partnership funding allowance follows the tuition contribution for traditional nonpublic placements outlined in Education Article § 8-415. The State partnership tuition contributions are calculated and based on the actual number of full-time equivalent seats used over the course of the school year.

If the number of full-time equivalent seats stated in the contract is not reached, will MSDE fund the MSDE contribution for the partnership in full?

NO. Reconciliation for the partnership is finalized at the close of each fiscal year. The total number of enrollment days for students served during the school year is used to calculate the actual number of full-time seats used. This actual FTE is compared to the number of FTE seats stated in the funding agreement. The MSDE funds only the actual number of FTE seats that have been used. The education agency is responsible for the funding of any unused FTE seats. In all instances, the Public/Private Partnership must be cost neutral to the State. The State's cost cannot exceed the cost for the equivalent number of placements through the traditional nonpublic tuition assistance program.

How soon before seeking State funding approval for a Public/Private Partnership from the Maryland State Department of Education should a local school system submit an application?

The request for State funding approval must be submitted at a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days prior to the request for State funding for each fiscal year. When the local education agency is renewing the partnership agreement the application materials should be submitted by the first of June, of each school year.

What is required to be submitted to the Maryland State Department of Education for approval of a Public/Private Partnership classroom or program?

The local school system is required to submit the following for classroom and program partnerships:

- The MSDE Public/Private Partnership Application (Due annually by June 1)
- Public/Private Partnership Agreement or Contract
- A budget completed by the nonpublic provider utilizing the MSDE budget packet
- The MSDE Public/Private Partnership Fiscal Worksheet

Biannually the local education agency submits monitoring data as outlined in the Student Attendance List.

What is a Preventive Service Partnership?

A Preventive Service Partnership is an incentive partnership offered through the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services, Nonpublic Special Education Section to local education agencies. Its purpose is to encourage utilization of wrap around services in support of public school placements for individual students, especially as a supplemental service intervention to avoid more restrictive nonpublic school placements. These partnerships work to bring specific services to children within the community public school.

To apply for a State funding contribution for a Preventive Service Partnership the following must be submitted:

- The MSDE Public/Private Partnership Application (Due annually by June 1)
- Public/Private Partnership Agreement or Contract
- A budget completed by the nonpublic provider utilizing the MSDE budget packet
- The Preventive Service Plan

Biannually the local education agency submits monitoring data as outlined in the Outcome Evaluation form.

What should a local school system do to establish a new Public/Private partnership program or preventive services partnership?

A local education agency that wants to establish a new partnership program should:

- Collect the data that supports the need for the program
- Outline a basic proposal and timeline for implementation of the partnership
- Identify the potential location to house the partnership
- Contact the MSDE, DSE/EIS, Nonpublic Special Education Section Chief to explore availability of funds and finalize an action plan to move forward.

How can I obtain additional information and where can I find the required applications and forms for a Public/Private partnership program or preventive service partnership?

Additional information can be obtained by contacting the MSDE Division of Early Intervention and Special Education (DSE/EIS), Nonpublic Special Education Section Chief at (410) 776- 1425. Complete contact information for the Nonpublic Special Education Section Chief and staff, as well as the required forms, can be located at <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Special-Education/NonpublicSpEd/index.aspx>